



Missouri Women Veterans News



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Editors Note: During the next few months there are going to be several events directed at our Women Veterans. Details of these events are included in this issue of the newsletter. A major upcoming event is the 7th annual National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators (NASWVC). It is being held in Reno, Nevada May 30 - June 3. I hope to bring back the latest information on Women's benefits from Capital Hill and new ideas on how to share this information with all 34,000 of you. I am excited to announce that the NASWVC committee has selected Branson, Missouri for the 2007 conference (Date of the 2007 conference to be announced at a later date).

I encourage all of Missouri's Women Veterans to attend the upcoming events in Branson in May. This is a major event to honor our Women Veterans and I will be there from May 18-21 to answer any questions you may have. I will also have registration forms available for those who have not yet had a chance to register with me. Don't forget the Veterans Fairs in Kirksville, Kansas City, and Warrensburg. I will be at the Kansas City and Warrensburg Veterans Fairs, and also at the ceremony in Higginsville. So plan on attending those events as well, I'd love to meet you.

MISSOURI VETERANS HOMES



The Missouri Veterans Commission (MVC) has seven long-term skilled nursing care facilities for Veterans of the State of Missouri. They are located in Cameron, Cape Girardeau, Mexico, Mt. Vernon, St. James, St. Louis and Warrensburg. To be eligible for admission you must be an honorably discharged Veteran of the Armed Forces; must have resided in the State of Missouri for at least 180 days during his/her lifetime; and must have been determined to require nursing home care. Currently the maximum amount that may be charged per month is \$1800.00. Ability to pay is based upon the Veterans' (and his or her spouses') total income and assets. The Veteran is always allowed to keep at least \$50.00 per month for personal use. There is no requirement to relinquish any of a Veteran's personal assets in order to qualify for admission. The MISSION of the Missouri Veterans Home is: "To daily enrich the lives of the Veterans we care for through the provisions of quality health care in a state-of-the-art facility". To obtain an application for admission, contact any one of the homes or a MVC service officer, or check out our web site at:

www.mvc.dps.mo.gov

Cameron: (816) 632-6010
Mt. Vernon (417) 466-7103
Mexico (573) 581-1088
Cape Girardeau (573) 290-5870

St. James: (573) 265-3271
St. Louis: (314) 340-6389
Warrensburg: (660) 543-5064

Editor's note: Currently there are 8 Women Veterans at Cameron; 8 at Cape Girardeau; 3 at Mexico; 10 at Mt. Vernon; 5 at St. James; 6 at St. Louis and 3 at Warrensburg. These female Veterans are using their earned benefits. Don't overlook this benefit if you are a Women Veteran in need of a nursing care facility.



Women in Uniform

PRESENT

MOTHER/DAUGHTER

**SRA
Jennifer
Swopes**



**Major
Christine
Knott**

Photograph by Rudy's Portraits

Major Christine Knott, USAF Nurse Corp, and daughter SRA Jennifer Swopes, USAF Medical Logistics of the 139th Air National Guard Medical Group, stepped forward when the need for their job specialty was required for an Air Expeditionary Force rotation in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Major Knott fulfilled a 3 month rotation at Baghdad International Airport, Iraq in 2004, in a forward deployed combat field hospital, which provided primary, intensive, and trauma care for 25,000 Americans, Coalition members and civilians in or stationed near Baghdad. At Camp Sather the 447 Expeditionary Medical Support Squadron combat field hospital, staff was under intermittent mortar and rocket attack and living conditions were austere. The field hospital was small and during the mass casualties events many of us worked around the clock, splitting shifts so that we could catch just a couple hours of sleep. Christine was later chosen as the Recipient of the 2004 Medical Service Award: Air National Guard Outstanding Nurse Corps Award and was awarded the Outstanding Unit Award with Valor.

From Sept. 2005-Jan. 2006 SRA Jennifer Swopes was assigned to Balad Air Base, Iraq, she served with the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Support Squadron as a team member of the medical logistics unit, along with other Active Duty and Air Guard troops. The medical unit came under regular mortar and rocket attacks throughout their deployment. To ensure logistic readiness and mission accomplishment her responsibilities included management of five major accounts in which she led the effort to establish a new logistics support program for this unit. With daily visits to outlying accounts she was able to establish a new customer service standard, which was lauded by her unit commander. The exposure to direct patient care has caused her to look closely at entering training to become a medical technician, perhaps leading to a nursing degree. SRA Swopes was chosen Balad Airman of the Month for Dec. 2005. In January, she was notified that she had been selected as the Medical Squadron recipient of the prestigious Diamond Sharp Award by the First Sergeants Council for the entire AEF rotation.

Jennifer states: "I now have a greater understanding of the dedication and sacrifice given by those soldiers who go outside the wire every day; they are the true heroes."

PAST

DAYLE TRIPP GOLDSWORTHY

I was born in Wilbraham, Massachusetts. I had an interest in travel as a teenager. I traveled New England as a nanny in the summers with a Cape Cod family. In 1968, I enlisted in the Navy to see the world. After Boot Camp at Bainbridge I was assigned to the Naval Air Facility, Washington, DC. Assigned to Air Operations as a Navy Airman, I greeted VIP aircraft, made sure transportation and accommodations were secured, scheduled flight times for reserves and flew as flight personnel. My experience in the Navy reinforced my desire to travel and laid the path for my future in the travel industry. Since my Discharge in 1971 I've been a travel agent, a tour company manager and managed an Army ITT in Germany. My travels have taken me to 5 continents and all over the USA. Five years ago I traded management in Florida for a simpler life in Branson. Today I am director of Sales for the Starlite and Show Theaters. I thoroughly enjoy selling the Lost in the 50's Show, the World Famous Platters and The Dalena Show. I am living a semiretired life with my Husband, a retired Army Sergeant, and we live on a rural hobby farm. I am also very active with the Branson Women Veterans Committee.



MARY (GILLESPIE) SLIVKA

I enlisted in the US Navy in Oct 1965. I wanted to go to nursing school and the Navy opened up some doors for me so that I could receive the training I needed. Basic for this very scared 18 year old began at Bainbridge MD, and after a 2 week leave, I was on to corpsmen school at Great Lakes Naval Base. Because of Vietnam, the need for corpsmen and corpwaves was in high demand, so I was assigned as a corpwave. I was then stationed at St. Albans Naval Station in NY in April 1966. During my time there an Air Vac carrying soldiers from Vietnam arrived. I was in charge of the ER and it was just like a scene out of MASH 4077th. Cots and wounded were everywhere. I will always carry in my heart the picture of the father's faces as they saw their injured sons for the 1st time. They were so proud and so glad to have them home again. Currently I am the Chairperson for the Women Veterans Committee in Branson. I am and always will be proud of being a Woman Veteran in the US Navy. My life has truly been blessed.





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UPCOMING EVENTS IN APRIL AND MAY

Veterans Benefit Fair's

April 12, 2006, Kansas City, Career Fair/Benefits Fair, Business and Technology College, BTC Exhibit Hall, 10:00-2:30.

April 28, 2006, Kirksville, Armory*

April 29, 2006, Warrensburg, American Legion Post #131, 733 Young St., 9:00-2:00.

* Time to be determined.

Please visit our website to find time and locations of these and future Benefit Fairs: www.mvc.dps.mo.gov

BRANSON TO CELEBRATE WOMEN VETERANS MAY 15-21

WANTED: Military and Patriotic Artists and Authors. Dayle Goldsworthy is looking for items to display in the EXPO during the Women Veterans week in Branson on Friday and Saturday, May 19 & 20, 2006. If you would like to display some of your work, or know of someone who would like to display their work, please contact Dayle no later than May 1, 2006 at: 2506 Victor Church Rd, Branson, MO 65616. Phone: 417/339-1021, or dtgoldsworthy@hotmail.com.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS IN BRANSON MAY 18-21

Thursday May 18, 2006

**THE LOWE FAMILY OF UTAH
THE WELK THEATRE**

Time: 10:00 am.

Cost: \$15.00

Phone: 417/336-0943

DIXIE STAMPEDE; DINNER/SHOW

Time: 4:30-7:00 p.m.

Cost: \$25.35 Incl. w/discount

Phone: 800/520-5544 or 417/337-9400

PRESLEY'S COUNTRY JUBILEE

Time: 8:00 pm

Cost: \$21.40

Phone: 417/334-4874

Friday, May 19, 2006

2nd Annual "WOMEN WHO SERVE EXPO"

Location: Lodge of the Ozarks

Time: 10:00-2:00 pm

Free and open to public

RECEPTION AT THE SETTLE INN

Time: 2:00-4:00 pm

Food, Talk, & Fun with fellow Women Veterans

RAFTERS RESTAURANT

Location: Lodge of the Ozarks

Time: 6:00 pm

Dinner on your own, informal

CELEBRATE AMERICA

Time: 6:00 pm

Cost: \$23.00

Phone: 866/707-4100

Saturday, May 20, 2006

2nd ANNUAL "WOMEN WHO SERVE EXPO"

Location: Lodge of the Ozark

Time: 10:00-2:00 pm

Free and open to Public

COLLEGE OF THE OZARKS

KEETER CENTER

Social hour: 5:00-5:30 pm

Group photo: 5:30 pm

BANQUET: In the Silver Dollar City Room

Time: 6:00-9:00 pm/By reservation only

Guest Speaker: BG Wilma Vaught

Cost: \$30.00/per person

Contact: Mary Slivka: 800/935-1199

or send to: M. Slivka, C/O BLACC

PO BOX 1897, Branson, MO 65615

Sunday, May 21, 2006

IN PRAISE OF WOMEN WHO SERVE

Location: Grand Palace Theater

Time: 10:00 am

No reservation required

BRUNCH

Chateau on the Lake

Time: 11:30-1:00 pm

Cost: \$25.00

By reservation only/ 888/333-5253

For more Information:

go to www.bransonWomenVeterans.com

or contact Mary Slivka at 800/935-1199, Ext. 317



Ask Karen



Q. If you are currently enrolled and receive your medications from the VA Medical Centers, and if you are over 65 and Medicare eligible, do you need to choose a Medicare Part “D” Drug Program?

Submitted by Shirley Walz

A. Good question. The answer is NO you do not HAVE TO enroll in Medicare Part D if you are currently enrolled in the VA health care system, because the VA is considered “creditable coverage.” If you lose your VA health care for whatever reason, you can then enroll in Medicare Part D without a penalty, if you do it within 62 days of losing your VA healthcare. For more information contact www.medicare.gov or contact your local VAMC.

Q. How many years do you have to serve to use the Veterans Hospitals? If a Women served three years is she able to use the hospitals and is there a charge? I am told she can but I don’t understand is it free, a percentage charge or what?

Submitted by Mary Ann Slivka

A. The answer is yes and no. Since she served 3 years, the military time factor has been met. To have benefits through the VA health care system, you have to have served 1 day of active duty service prior to Sept. 1980. If your military service began after Sept. 1980, then you must have served at least two years to qualify, or have a service-connected disability. You also must have an honorable discharge. However, the VA is limited on doctors, so they have set up different priority groups, depending on if you are S/C or not, if you have a purple heart, your net worth and income, etc. As far as the cost of care, it too depends on S/C or NSC. S/C disabilities are free. There are co-pays on certain categories of NSC Veterans. I recommend that you contact a VSO or the eligibility clerk at a VAMC to discuss your eligibility and then submit an application (1010EZ) to the nearest VA Medical Center to let the VA determine your status.

Letter to the Editor

(None Submitted)

MILITARY LIVING - A TRUE STORY

I awoke with the sound of crying, not loud, piercing crying, more of a soft weeping. My first thought was that one of the kids must have had a bad dream. I checked each of their rooms, all sound asleep. But, where was the crying coming from? It was still there, close by. I woke up my husband and asked him where the crying was coming from, he didn’t hear the crying. And then the phone rang. It was my niece. My mother was near death and on the way to the hospital, they were doing CPR, but she had no heart beat on her own. My only thought was, I’ve got to go. When you’re stationed on Guam, thousands of miles away, getting home is not easy. This particular day was even more difficult and would prove to be impossible. April 28, 1986, President Reagan was coming to Anderson AFB and would be addressing the troops. We had tickets to go, but I needed to leave. I had to get on a Space-A-Flight or a commercial flight today! I felt numb; I didn’t know what to do, so I called my friend Karen. I don’t remember our conversation, but I know she was there as soon as I hung up the phone. What happened next could have been a scene from a movie. Karen went into a drill sergeant mode. Her military background took over and off we went. The base was in lock-down. Roads were barricaded, security police were stationed everywhere. The gates were closed. We were driving in a maze, trying to get to the terminal. I looked at Karen and saw this look on her face. I knew we were going for it. She said we’re going through the barricade! We had gone no more than one block when we were surrounded! Security police on all sides with their guns drawn and pointing at us! They wanted ID’s and informed us of the severity and possible consequences of our actions. They called the commander who verified our story of an emergency. We were lucky! I had envisioned myself in jail, trying to explain it to my husband and children! We were escorted to the terminal. I didn’t get off the island that day. My next phone call was that of the death of my mother. Karen stayed with me and helped us all to get to the airport. I didn’t go back to Guam as our next assignment was moved up. It was Karen who was there for the movers, overseeing everything and making sure our quarters passed inspection. The words “Military family” took on a new meaning for me that day. Anyone who has ever been stationed overseas will understand. It’s your friends who become your family. Sometimes the bond is stronger than that of your family back home. It’s hard to put into words how I feel about Karen. To simply call her a friend does not describe our connection. And now, 20 years later, I smile when I think of that day and how she stood by me in my hour of need.

Submitted by Ruth Mabie



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HIGGINSVILLE CEMETERY TO HONOR WOMEN



The Missouri State Veterans Cemetery in Higginsville will honor America's Women Veterans, past and present on Memorial Day, May 29, 2006, at 1:00 pm. Kathy Lee, VSO, VFW, KC VAMC, will be the guest speaker. All Women Veterans are encouraged to attend this ceremony commemorating their service and sacrifice in defense of our Nation. For further information, please contact the cemetery at: 660/584-5252.

Women from Missouri Killed in the Line of Duty

With Memorial Day approaching, we reflect on ALL of our soldiers who have given the ultimate sacrifice. Missouri Women Veterans News (MWVN) wants to especially remember the Women Veterans from MISSOURI who died in the line of duty. This information was obtained from Judy Bellafaire, the historian at the Women Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. If anyone has been overlooked, please contact us so we can pass on this information to the historian.

World War I

Hettie Shepard of Joplin, Missouri joined the Army Nurse Corps during World War I and was assigned to Camp Pike, Arkansas where she died in a military vehicle accident on June 1, 1919.

World War II

Women's Army Corps Private Rosemary F. Scheer of St. Louis, Missouri, died on March 12, 1945 of injuries received in a government vehicle accident at Ritzville, near Spokane, Washington. Private Scheer was stationed at Ephrata Army Air Base in Ephrata, Washington.

Specialist Mabel Von Arx of St. Louis, Missouri was assigned to the WAC Headquarters Detachment, U.S. Army Forces Western Pacific. She died on June 11, 1945 when the aircraft she was on crashed somewhere between Pilelia Island and Leyte in the Philippines.

Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm

CW-2 Carol McKinney of St. Louis, Missouri served in the Army seven years before joining the National Guard in 1990. When Operation Desert Shield started, McKinney's unit, the 1267 Medical Evacuation Company, 635th Aviation Group, was called to active duty and informed they would be sent to Southwest Asia. McKinney, flying as co-pilot, was ferrying a UH-1 helicopter from Fort Leonard Wood to Houston Texas for shipment to the Gulf when the helicopter crashed 50 miles north of Houston in thick night fog. She was 36 years old.

Operations Iraqi Freedom/Enduring Freedom

Private First Class Lavena Lynn Johnson, USA of Florissant, Missouri, was 19 years old when she died of non-combat related injuries in Balad, Iraq on July 19, 2005. Johnson was assigned to the 129th Corps Support Battalion, Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

KIA: Sgt. Amanda N. Pinson was killed in action on March 16, 2006 by a mortar round near Tikrit, Iraq. She was with the 101st Military Intelligence Detachment, 501st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). Sadly she becomes the 1st woman KIA in the State of Missouri. She was from St. Louis. *Submitted by Bernadette Miller*

Missouri Women Veterans News is written and published by Missouri Veterans Commission staff.

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State of Missouri Women Veterans

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Birth Date: _____ / _____ / _____
Day Month Year

Place of Birth: _____
City/State

Service (Circle one) USA USMC USN USAF OTHER _____

Service dates: From _____ To _____
From _____ To _____

Receiving VA or Medical Benefits: Yes _____ No _____

If Yes, what benefit: _____ (i.e. pension, comp, medical, etc.)

Have you received benefits in the past: Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what benefit: _____

Would you like a Veteran's Service Officer in your local area to contact you to explain your potential benefits? Yes _____ No _____

To receive your free Woman Veteran State Sticker

Return this to :

Missouri Veterans Commission/Karen Etzler

Women Veterans Coordinator/VSO

525 Jules, Room 320

St. Joseph, MO 64501

816/387-2841

or send a request via email to: Karen.Etzler@mvc.dps.mo.gov